ABSTRACT

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# THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL CLIMATE AND OTHER SELECTED VARIABLES ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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This study examined the impact of school climate on student achievement in the DeKalb County School System (DCSS). It was the contention that various factors impact school climate. Students who attend schools with a large population of students from low socioeconomic family status are more likely to perform poorly on standardized tests. Data were collected and analyzed from forty randomly selected elementary schools in the DCSS, utilizing a 40-item Likert-type instrument, O'Neal's Effective Schools Climate Inventory. The Pearson *r* correlation coefficient was used to test for significance.

This study found that there was a significant relationship between student achievement on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills fourth-grade reading scores and socioeconomic status of the schools. To a lesser degree, there was a significant relationship between student achievement and gender of the

principal. It was also discovered that there was no significant difference between principals' race and years of experience and student achievement. One of the major conclusions of this study is that student achievement is greatly impacted by socioeconomic status of th hool. To improve student achievement in low socioeconomic schools, principals must provide staff development activities that will empower teachers to use teaching strategies which will improve school climate for this population and subsequently affect student achievement.

# THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL CLIMATE AND OTHER SELECTED VARIABLES ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

There has been an abundance of research conducted on school climate which investigated the nature of school relationships between incumbents of various hierarchical levels of schools, principals, teachers, and students (Anderson 1982, Brookover and Schneider 1975). Kaufman and Herman (1991) contended that the climate of the school is established by the principal. There is a need for more research to be conducted on the impact that school climate has on student achievement as the student populations change from middle income (urban) to lower socioeconomic.

Schools, like all organizations, have personalities and unique ways in which they operate. Similarly, they vary in the methodology used by employees as they work with each other and the outside world (Getzels and Guba 1957). In addition, Clark, Lotto, and Murphy (1980) emphasized the importance of school climate for learning. According to Clark (1957), school climate as it relates to student achievement may be defined as norms, expectations, and beliefs of the people within a school which govern their behavior in the domain of student achievement.

School climate may be defined as a feeling, tone, getting along, respect, or happiness in the workplace. Also, it is characterized by a comfortable, orderly, and safe environment (Karpicke and Murphy 1996). Wilson (1971) defined climate as socially shared and transmitted knowledge of what is and what ought to be, symbolized in act and artifacts.

Williams (1970) believed that an effective school climate provides a normative structure for a social group. A positive school climate is, therefore, the wellspring from which flows recurrent and predictable behavior. Lunney's (1996) perception focused on the belief that the school climate is created by the principal. The principal, as the school leader, is the single most important person in creating school climate (Rosenholtz 1989). According to these findings, school leadership must be envisioned as a significant component in shaping school climate.

Other members of the school staff, in addition to the school principal, exert an influence upon the school learning climate. However, the principal's vision is considered the most influential. Brookover (1979) and Clark, Lotto, and Murphy (1980) contended that high expectations, role clarity, cooperative effort, and shared norms about order and discipline are the products of principals' daily managerial behavior toward teachers and pupils that help them shape an effective school climate.

McKenzie (1986) examined the relationship between public school climate and school effectiveness in terms of student achievement and found that effective school climate does impact student achievement. His study examined the organization's communication ability, effective leadership (as determined by the teaching staff), motivation of students and teachers, decision making, and goal setting. Yelton (1992) conducted a study of ninety-one schools and found that teacher expectation of student performance is the most influential factor in creating an effective school climate. However, Drake (1997) in his study found that leadership plays a vital role in shaping the climate of the building. In addition, his study concurred with Yelton (1992) that staff expectations, morale, and dedication play a vital role in creating the school climate that results in achievement of the school's mission and in the academic achievement of students. Whitaker (1992) analyzed the relationships among principal's effectiveness and school climate and found that principal's effectiveness as perceived by the teaching staff played a significant role in creating an effective school climate.

Rosenholtz (1989) and Edmonds (1979) cited the single most important element in developing school climate as the principal, the individual who is expected to provide leadership for the school. Leadership is defined as the quality within a given setting to motivate and inspire

individuals to adopt, achieve, and maintain organizational and individual goals (Hammond 1989). Many studies have dealt with leadership in American education. Some studies offered suggestions about the desired nature of such leadership, while others explored the qualifications, experiences, and motivation necessary for school leaders to create a positive climate for student achievement (Hammond 1989).

Effective leaders have a commitment for the school to accomplish its mission and demonstrate this commitment by continually communicating the vision to the school's internal and external clients. In addition, the principal models the behavior that is within the values of the school and encourages the staff to do the same. The principal is creative and willing to take risks to improve his or her performance and the performance of the staff and students of the school. In addition, effective leaders believe that they can cause change and accept the responsibility for providing leadership for the group. Effective principals demonstrate a readiness to make decisions; they know when a decision needs to be made and who should make the decision, and they consider how the decision will impact the operation of the school (Drake and Roe 1989).

Schools, like people, have personalities and unique ways in which they operate. Similarly, they vary in methodologies used by employees as they work with each other within the organization and with external groups outside of

the school community (Getzels and Guba 1957). Schools are also shaped by their leadership. Kaufman and Herman (1991) contended that the personality or climate of the school is shaped by the principal. Brookover (1979) and Clark, Lotto, and Murphy (1980) agreed that the principal plays a key role in establishing an effective school climate.

In shaping the climate, the principal should use all of the members of the school organization in order to make fundamental changes in the way the school delivers services to all internal and external clients. In a study conducted by Gondor (1994), her findings indicated that there is a need for the principals to involve students, teachers, and members of the business community to collaborate to bring about the changes inside and outside of the school that make learning possible. Wilson (1984) agreed that internal and external clients of the system should participate in the changes of the school to make them more effective.

Brookover (1979) and Clark, Lotto, and Murphy (1980) contended that high expectations, role clarity, cooperative effort, and shared norms about order and discipline are the products of principals' daily managerial behavior toward teachers and pupils that help them shape an effective school climate.

In schools with an effective climate, the principal and teachers share values and goals. The staff also have the opportunity and are encouraged to work collaboratively

on issues of curriculum and instruction. These areas are of the greatest priority to teachers (Conley 1983), and the values and goals for curriculum and instruction constitute the vision of school leadership as a significant component in shaping school climate. When the vision is embraced by faculty members of the organization, the principal has positively impacted the organization's morale, thereby performing one of the unique tasks of administrators, which is to integrate the demands of the institution and the demands of the staff in a way that is at once organizationally productive and individually fulfilling, yielding an effective school climate (Getzels and Guba 1957).

Schools with effective climates are led by effective principals (Lezotte 1992). These individuals can communicate their vision to others in the school in such a manner that they come to share the vision and commitment (Lezotte 1992).

Cotton (1995) examined the role of the principal and its impact on student achievement. Her findings indicated that effective principals are professionals who excel in the knowledge of teaching and learning. They are experts with academic credentials which establish their ability to create effective schools (Drake and Roe 1989). Effective principals also communicate their vision, goals, and expectations for student achievement, creating a climate conducive to learning. This type of school climate fosters or serves as

a vehicle for student achievement (Lambert 1988, Rosenholtz 1989). Providing effective leadership which will influence the establishment of positive school climate in order to produce increased student achievement calls for an examination of what students are expected to achieve as identified by public and governmental entities.

The core of the instructional focus continues to be the curriculum, just as its mastery continues to be the standard by which student achievement is measured. While there are many goals which schools strive to achieve, strengthening the curriculum ranks as top priority. A well-defined and uniform curriculum must be established, especially when there is a highly mobile student population. A uniform curriculum serves many purposes. It provides the opportunity to acquire the same skills and knowledge regardless of school location or instructor, it makes possible a systematic approach for measuring pupil mastery, and it provides information that helps with future planning (Edmonds 1979).

Schools strive to provide effective leadership and positive school learning opportunities for students to master reading, writing, and arithmetic, but student achievement must be assessed or measured. The best methods for the measurement of student achievement, as cited by Ron Edmonds (1981), usually follow these guidelines:

1. The measurement tool should be locally generated to ensure that students are tested on what they are taught.

2. The measurement instrument should be nationally validated to ensure that the definition of mastery in the particular school or district is acceptable in other school districts.

3. The measurement instrument should be curriculum based, once again to ensure that students are tested on what they are taught.

4. The measurement instrument should be criterion referenced to ensure that students are tested on what they are taught.

5. The instrument should be standardized to eliminate teacher subjectivity as a possible source of error.

It is important that testing be recognized and accepted by administrators, teachers, parents, and students as a valid means of measuring student achievement and generating useful data.

As educational researchers continue to examine the relationship between student achievement and the role schools play, several issues must be examined. Effective implementation of the changes that are needed to improve schools includes a total restructuring of the entire educational system. Since this involves a significant period of time, money, and effort, most districts have demonstrated an unwillingness to commit to such wholesale change (Fite

1995). In addition, the issues of teacher rigidity and apathy are imposing obstacles that school districts must address as schools continue to focus on improving student achievement.

The issue of public school impact on student achievement was examined by Standridge (1996) as she investigated the relationship of school-based decision making and its impact on student achievement. The study focused on the involvement of teachers in selecting and implementing the curriculum that they thought would best meet the needs of their students. The findings of the study indicated that student achievement is positively impacted by greater participation of teachers in selecting goals, shaping the vision, establishing the mission, and participating in selecting the curriculum and materials for their students. Venrick (1995) found in her study that teacher perceptions had a significant impact on student achievement. In addition, Venrick's findings suggested that teacher perceptions had a positive impact on student achievement regardless of socioeconomic status of the school. Although low socioeconomic schools' performance was lower than that of middle socioeconomic schools, there was a significant impact on student achievement as a result of teacher perceptions.

Effective schools have defining characteristics that make them different from ineffective schools. Effective schools have a strong leader who is able to articulate the

vision of the school, who has commitment to see that every student will learn, and who has just as strong a commitment to eliminate any activity that interferes with the pursuit of student achievement. The climate of an effective school is orderly without being rigid, quiet without being oppressive, and supportive to students and teachers. Effective schools design some method whereby pupil progress and teacher performance can be frequently monitored and measured and, when necessary, the energy and resources of the school will be redirected to achieve the fundamental objective, which is student achievement (Cotton 1995). Therefore, local school designs should not depend on changes over which some method of control cannot be exerted (Edmonds 1979).

In an effective school setting, the principal need not bring all students to identical levels of mastery; however, an equal percentage of its highest and lowest social classes should achieve minimum mastery (Lezotte and Edmonds 1977). Effective schools create a climate that enables all students to develop and achieve the mastery of skills. Hughes (1995) conducted a study of effective schools, and her findings indicated that effective schools were characterized by high student achievement, irrespective of socioeconomic status or parent involvement, low teacher turnover, faculty teamwork, high staff morale and accountability, teachers with high levels of education, experience, and commitment, strong teacher beliefs that children can achieve,

infrequent arguments, strong student pride and respect, student services and programs to offset the effects of poverty, strong instructional leadership, and a supportive principal. Ineffective schools tended to display traits that were opposites of those of effective schools. In a study conducted by Levine (1991), his findings indicated that characteristics of effective school principal included the following: (1) insistence that all participants take responsibility for improvement, (2) persistence in seeking attain high standards, (3) resiliency in moving forward despite obstacles and discouragements, and (4) consistency in implementing coordinated and coherent programs to improve instruction.

In a study conducted by the University of Virginia of thirty-three high and thirty-three low achieving elementary schools, it was found that low achieving schools had 2.5 times more low-income students than high achieving schools and had teachers with less education and experience. In the study, some schools from similar socioeconomic status were matched, and the results indicted that some of the schools' student achievement scores were significantly higher than others. These differences in scores were attributed to the fact that high achieving schools provided their students with dissimilar opportunities for achievement and success.

## Purpose of the Study

There has been a sharp and steady decline in student achievement, as measured by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), in fourth-grade reading scores as the student composition of the DeKalb County School System has changed from suburban to urban. This school system at one time had most of its students performing at or above the national average, but as the school system changed from suburban to urban, there has been a sharp decline in the test scores of the students. There is a significant number of the same administrators and teachers who enjoyed the success of the suburban student population but who are now enduring the wrath of the public because the schools are not performing as in the past.

The purpose of this study was to identify important factors impacting school climate and subsequently student achievement in the current school population of the DeKalb County School System. Results of this study may enable schools to build and foster positive school climate and help to maximize student achievement.

## Background of the Study

A number of important historical events contributed to the significance of effective school leadership and student achievement. In the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education case, the Supreme Court ruled that the practice of

separate-but-equal education was unequal and forced administrators to racially integrate the schools. This presented a challenge for board of education members in that the public, by and large, opposed the decision and these were elected board members. If they carried out the ruling of the court, they would not be reelected. The local building principals were, in all probability, unsure of and unprepared to lead a school through the turbulent times that were surely on the horizon in integrated schools. In 1957, another event, the successful launching of the Russian satellite Sputnik, created an outcry by the leaders of the United States that our students were failing to compete with students in other industrialized nations.

Many of the social ills of our society--urban migration, breakdown of the family, crime, race relations, poverty, and unemployment--are factors that impact schools. Schools are, therefore, facing the challenge of increasing student achievement at the same time that principals are faced with addressing the needs of a student body that is impacted by an array of social ills.

Educators are vigorously seeking ways to improve the performance of schools. Former Secretary of Education William Bennett said that what makes schools effective is "The Principal of the Thing" (Karpicke and Murphy 1996). Numerous studies of the problems of public education have been conducted, and the results indicate that our schools

are not producing the results that the public is demanding. The public believes our schools should help build America by creating a literate citizenry. However, as our population continues to grow and become more complex, the need for effective school leaders will grow even more important.

Educators have become increasingly convinced that the characteristics of schools are important determinants of academic achievement (Edmonds 1977). The characteristics that create an effective school climate are: (1) the principal's leadership and attention to the quality of instruction; (2) a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus; (3) an orderly, safe climate conducive to teaching and learning; (4) teacher behaviors that convey the expectation that all students are expected to attain at least minimum mastery; and (5) the use of measures of pupil achievement as the basis for a program evaluation (Edmonds 1977). The idea that schools do not make a difference in the achievement of children has done a great deal to obstruct educational progress. Some educators have used this idea as an excuse for believing that poor or minority children cannot be expected to learn as much or as well as others. Some principals have used this idea as a license to administer ineffective schools (Shoemaker and Frasher 1981). Coleman's (1966) report stated that the home environment variables were the most important in explaining variance in achievement levels for all racial and regional groups;

school facilities and curriculum were the least important variables.

Independent studies conducted near the end of the 1970s set out to test the proposition that schools make no difference. The studies explored the following questions: Can schooling be effective for black children and for poor children? Can school compensate for differences of family background and race? In all cases the researcher paid attention to race, socioeconomic status, and home background factors in their methodology, design, and analysis. The results of the studies indicated that the principal is important in determining the school's effectiveness (Shoemaker and Frasher 1991).

## Statement of the Problem

In the DeKalb County School System, located in the metropolitan Atlanta area, fourth-grade students are performing below the area, state, and national averages in reading and mathematics. A closer review of the system's Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) profile reveals there has been a declining trend in the reading test scores over the past four years. In view of these findings, this study investigated the school climate to determine its effect on student achievement. A positive school climate is one in which the school leader (the principal) articulates and shapes the vision of the school for academic success in such

a way that the faculty and staff work toward shared goals and values for academic achievement. The literature suggests that it is critical that school leaders be effective and assertive in creating a positive school climate that will enhance student achievement. A large percentage of DeKalb elementary administrators may need support, assistance, and guidance in creating and managing an effective school climate. There are certain distinct variables that contribute to effective leadership.

## Significance of the Study

Student achievement is declining in DeKalb elementary schools. As a result, the effectiveness of the schools is being questioned by the public and many educators. As the effectiveness of the schools is being questioned, an initial step in assessing the cause of the status of the DeKalb County School System may begin with an examination of the school climate. The findings in this study may provide information that will explain why student achievement in DeKalb elementary schools has declined. The results of the study can also be used to assist and may enable school leaders to create an effective climate that is conducive to learning. Data were evaluated in terms of gender, race, years of leadership, and socioeconomic status of the school community.

## Research Questions

Five research questions were developed for this comprehensive study:

1. Is there a relationship between the effective school climate of a school and student achievement?

2. Is there a relationship between the effective school climate of a school and student achievement based on the gender of the school leader?

3. Is there a relationship between the effective school climate of a school and student achievement based on the years of experience as principal?

4. Is there a relationship between the effective school climate of a school and student achievement based on the race of the school leader?

5. Is there a relationship between student achievement and free lunch status of the school?

## Summary

In summary, effective leadership influences the creation of a positive school climate which, in turn, yields increased student achievement. Numerous studies have been conducted by educational researchers examining the characteristics of an effective school principal. These studies have been conducted because many public schools have, in the opinion of the public and governmental entities, done a poor job of educating students. However, although there have

been many public schools, usually in poor or urban areas, that have been unsuccessful in educating their students, there have been and continue to be schools in similar areas where students are achieving. The reason for this discrepancy has been a focal point for educational researchers.

Students in schools with effective climates tend to realize academic achievement as a result of several of the following factors: (1) all members of the school believe all students in the school can achieve at least the minimum requirements; (2) the vision of the effective school is clear and shared by all including teachers, staff, administrators, and parents; (3) the performance of the students is assessed with standardized tests, and the data are used to plan future instructional programs; and (4) the staff and the curriculum are assessed, and needed changes are implemented in both areas. Who or what conditions are responsible for an effective school climate, and can these characteristics be transferred to schools that are ineffective?

The next chapter reviews the research on the topic of creating a climate for effective schools, the leadership and its role in education, and how effective school climate enables students to achieve.

# CHAPTER II

# REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

## Introduction

In this chapter, a review of the related literature is presented. Shared goals and values with a common purpose is the basic theme characterizing effective school climates. Creating such a quality relationship between school leadership and staff with a common goal of impacting student achievement is the focus of this study. This chapter presents a review of the related literature relative to topics, variables, research questions, and null hypotheses in this investigation of school climate. The review specifically focuses on (1) creating a climate for effective schools, (2) school leaders, (3) leadership and its role in education, and (4) how effective school climate enables students to achieve.

Climate not only indicates the quality of life in a school, but also influences that school's capacity to change the work habits and operating styles of principals, teachers, and students and, ultimately, the quality of teaching and learning. The relationship between school climate and these effectiveness indicators, however, is not

direct (Sergiovanni 1987). School climate has obvious implications for improving the quality of work life for those who work in schools. What is the link between school climate and teacher motivation, school improvement efforts, student achievement, and other effectiveness indicators? According to Sergiovanni (1987), no easy answer exists, for these relationships are indeed complex. Schools are characterized by a great deal of togetherness and familiarity. Trust among teachers is bred in successful schools with a high degree of collaboration and teamwork. Climate is a form of organized energy in which its efforts in the school depend largely on how this energy is channeled and directed.

School climate should be regarded as a measure of the satisfaction of both teachers and students, as well as a measure of high productivity, which is described in terms of student achievement. Studies have found the following characteristics in schools with a positive school climate with respect to student achievement:

1. Teachers have high expectations for student achievement. They are confident of their ability to teach all students and accept their responsibility to do so. Instructional time is protected from distractions.

2. The school's atmosphere is orderly and generally conducive to learning; learning progress is monitored closely.

3. The principal is recognized as the person who, more than any other, is both responsible for and accountable for the feelings of satisfaction and productivity of staff, students, and parents (Sergiovanni 1992).

## Student Achievement and School Climate

Brookover and Lezotte (1982) conducted a study to determine what factors influenced schools who made gains in student achievement, as opposed to the schools with declining student achievement. The following were their conclusions:

1. The school staffs in schools with an increase in student achievement exhibited a great deal of emphasis on the accomplishment of the basic reading and mathematics objectives (Brookover and Lezotte 1982).

2. The educators from the schools making improvement believed that all their students could master the basic objectives, and they believed their principals shared these feelings (Brookover and Lezotte 1982).

3. The staff members of the high achieving schools believed that their students could accomplish tasks successfully, while the staff members of the lower achieving schools perceived that their students could not finish high school or college (Brookover and Lezotte 1982).

4. Since the teachers in the lower achieving schools believed that there was little that could be done,

they spent less time in direct reading instruction than did teachers of the higher achieving schools (Brookover and Lezotte 1982).

5. Teachers in the lower achieving schools did not assume responsibility for student progress and achievement (Brookover and Lezotte 1982).

6. There seemed to be a clear difference in the principals' role in the higher achieving schools and lower achieving schools. The principals in the former schools were more likely to be instructional leaders, more assertive in their instructional leadership role, more of a disciplinarian, and, perhaps most of all, assumed responsibility for the evaluation of the achievement of objectives. Conversely, the principals in the lower achieving schools appeared to be permissive and emphasized informal and collegial relationships with the teachers. They put more emphasis on general public relations and less emphasis upon evaluation of the school's effectiveness in providing a basic education for the students (Brookover and Lezotte 1982).

7. The higher achieving schools accept greater accountability (Brookover and Lezotte 1982).

8. Teachers in the higher achieving schools felt more successful than their counterparts in the lower achieving schools. Helping staff members to improve their performance would, more likely, cause tension and dissatisfaction

in the latter setting. Existing conditions in the lower achieving schools seemed to create an air of complacency (Brookover and Lezotte 1982).

9. There was no difference in the level of parental involvement in both types of schools. However, the faculty of the higher achieving schools indicated that they had more parent-initiated involvement (Brookover and Lezotte 1982).

10. The improving schools were not characterized by a high emphasis on paraprofessional staff or a heavy involvement of the regular teacher in the selection of students to be placed in compensatory education programs. The declining schools seemed to have a greater number of different staff involved in reading instruction and more teacher involvement in identifying students who were to be placed in compensatory education programs (Brookover and Lezotte 1982).

In order for urban students to succeed in schools, it is essential that schools become relevant and inviting to them. Curriculum related to their culture, their aspirations, and their experiences will make learning more meaningful to the students (Lunney 1996). The principals of improving schools communicate to teachers and staff that learning in a democracy must be inclusive learning for all, and the principal is able to communicate this vision so that all can come to share this vision.

Principals of improving or effective schools are visionary leaders (Lezotte 1992). The principal's vision cannot endure unless he or she can create a mass of support from those helping to implement the vision. If the principal has teachers who believe that schools are a democratic society in which the commitment to help all students achieve is the driving thrust, the journey is a bit easier and progress is more likely to be realized in an expedient manner. Principals can be powerful forces for school change and restructuring when they are flexible and allow teachers to take part in rational problem solving and shared decision making. One of the most powerful forces for the improvement of student achievement is the development of teachers' skills and the development of a feeling of power and professionalism among teachers (Hall 1968). Vann (1993) also strongly suggested that teachers should be involved in the long-term and short-term planning and operation of schools.

Effective principals excel in the knowledge of teaching and learning. They are recognized experts with academic credentials that establish their abilities to create an effective school (Drake and Roe 1989). What is it that students are expected to learn? For years, educators and citizens thought that schools should limit their efforts to basic academic education. A major confrontation regarding differences in viewpoints was precipitated in October of 1957, when the Soviet Union became the first nation to put

an object in orbit by launching the basketball-sized Sputnik. Looking for a scapegoat for what they considered to be the United States' second-class position in a new space age, the public sought answers as to why the Soviet Union had the edge on the United States in space exploration. Many Americans felt that schools were devoting too much time and effort to extracurricular activities and not enough to academics (Drake and Roe 1989).

While many educational researchers share the belief that the principal is the single most important component of an effective school, Ellett and Wilberg (1979) described the relationship between principal behavior and student outcome as nonrecursive. Ellett and Wilberg (1979) argued that causal linkages across the variables of principal behavior within school conditions (including parent behavior) and student outcomes are reciprocally related in such a way that each affects and depends on the others. Thus, the functional relationships among all variables are portrayed as bidirectional.

Couch (1991) conducted a study of student achievement and how it relates to the principal in the role of instructional leader. Couch's (1991) findings indicated that the principal's role as instructional leader has no effect upon student achievement scores in all areas except mathematics. However, even though the findings with respect to the effects of instructional leadership by the principal

in this study seem to contradict most of the effective schools research, this is actually not the case. Without question, the role of the principal as instructional leader is recognized as being critical to the planning, implementation, and supervision of a school. Principals shape student learning by attending to school-level factors such as student time in classrooms, instructional class size and composition, and grouping of teachers (teams, departments), rather than by directly supervising individual teachers. The administrator influences student achievement indirectly by manipulating structural-technical relationships (Barnard 1982).

Hoer (1996) offered a new way to define instructional leadership: the obstacles to the job are the job. Managerial activities interrupt principals during classroom observations; a skilled principal whose primary focus is to serve as the instructional leader of that school will find a way to get around the obstacles. Although the principal bears the ultimate responsibility for the quality of his or her school, it is both necessary and appropriate that teachers take on some of the responsibility for instructional leadership. This means the principal will share power. It also means that teachers will view their role from a schoolwide perspective, not just a classroom perspective. Teachers, working together, will take responsibility for helping their peers.

The principal's role in the instructional development of schools has been a focus of educational research for a number of years. The research has demonstrated the great need for strong instructional leadership in schools and has identified several common characteristics of effective leaders. One of these characteristics that is extremely important in the life of a school and is often neglected is that of being a visible principal. Many principals get caught up in the day-to-day office operations, discipline, paperwork, and telephone conversations. They fail to realize that school business of major importance is found not in the office, but in the classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, and cafeteria. They will never have a sense of this unless they immerse themselves in the atmosphere beyond the office door. Granted, all principals do their necessary observations, hand out paychecks, and at times deliver messages of importance to students and staff. But being a part of and knowing the workings of the school extend far beyond attending a limited number of events.

Educational researchers are becoming increasingly convinced that the characteristics of schools are important determinants of academic achievement (Edmonds 1979). These characteristics that create an effective school climate are: (1) the principal's leadership and attention to the quality of instruction; (2) a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus; (3) an orderly, safe climate conducive

to learning; (4) teachers' behavior that conveys the expectations that all students are expected to obtain at least minimum mastery; and (5) the use of measures of pupil achievement as the basis for program evaluation (Edmonds 1977). The idea that schools do not make a difference in the achievement of children has done a great deal to obstruct educational progress. Some educators have used this idea as an excuse for believing that poor or minority children cannot be expected to learn as much or as well as others. Some principals have used this concept as a license to administer ineffective schools (Shoemaker and Frasher 1981). The Coleman Report (Coleman 1966) findings indicated that the variables in the home environment were most important in explaining variance in achievement levels for all racial and regional groups. The findings of the Coleman Report deemphasized the significance of school facilities and curriculum as major contributors to student achievement (Coleman 1966).

Independent studies conducted near the end of the 1970s set out to test the proposition as to whether or not schools make a difference in the achievement of students. These studies explored the following questions: (1) Can schooling be effective for poor children and black children? and (2) Can schools compensate for differences in family backgrounds and race? In most cases, the researchers investigated race, socioeconomic status, and home background

factors in their methodologies, designs, and analyses. The results of the studies indicated that the principal is most important in determining the school's overall effectiveness (Shoemaker and Frasher 1978).

In the field of education, the term "socioeconomic status" is used to categorize a family or a school into an income bracket that qualifies the family for free or reduced price breakfast and lunch. The school receives certain compensatory programs if a sufficient number of students at a particular school qualify for free or reduced meals. Socioeconomic status is being considered in this study to determine if the income level of the family from which the student comes has an impact on the student's academic achievement. Impoverished children traditionally performed poorly on standardized tests in most of the nation's public schools (Coleman 1966, Thompson 1968). Urban schools in America have a staggering number of students who fail to receive an education which would allow them to be successful, productive, and contributing citizens (Lunney 1996).

In a survey of forty urban schools, Gastright (1989) found that retention rates for children from the lowest socioeconomic levels were twice the rate of those from the highest socioeconomic levels. In order for urban students to succeed in schools, it is essential that schools become relevant and inviting to them. Curriculum related to their culture, their aspirations, and their experiences will make

learning more meaningful. At the core of schools creating the climate to meet the needs of the students is a need for schools to change their delivery system by changing the urban student from a passive learner into an active learner. Active learning empowers students to have a voice in what they learn and direct their learning. Therefore, creating a climate that encourages teachers to select and implement instructional initiatives such as cooperative learning, because of its documented success for increasing engagement and student achievement, is of great importance (Lunney 1996). In this study, the researcher investigated the impact, if any, that school climate has on academic achievement of students from various socioeconomic backgrounds.

Student achievement (Shapiro and Bloom 1977) is the complex result of many interrelated factors, only one of which is ability. In order to raise students' cognitive development, educators must consider socioeconomic status of the student's family, geographic transiency, and parental involvement. Thompson (1968) stated that the greatest factor to consider in student achievement and socioeconomic status is tailoring the curriculum to meet the needs of students by creating a school climate that embraces a philosophy that all students can and will achieve. When these factors are present, there is little difference between the achievement of students according to race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

An effective school is defined as one in which all the percentages of students from the lowest socioeconomic class who maintain mastery of the basic skills taught at each grade level is the same as the percentage of students from the highest socioeconomic class (Muth 1983). All students can learn, regardless of gender, race, or socio-economic status, as confirmed by many studies that have been conducted (Edmonds 1979, Lezotte 1996). However, students in highly impoverished public schools show a much greater need for special education support than do students in schools with a lower percentage of poor students. Students in poor communities generally engage less in interactive learning, such as cooperative learning. Teachers in such schools see the school climate as less positive and less stimulating and have little faith in their ability to exert influence (Solomon et al. 1996). Teachers in these kinds of schools were less trusting of students and more skeptical about their students' abilities.

Educational leadership in America has largely been the domain of the white males since the beginning of formal public education in the mid-1950s. This trend continues even today in many educational leadership positions such as principals, assistant superintendents, and school system superintendents. In fact, 93 percent of the school super-intendents in this country are white males. This dominance of white males in top leadership positions is largely due to

the fact that board of education members are largely white males. Board members must support, approve, and/or appoint the top leaders in education. Therefore, as the search for an educational leader is conducted, white males continue to be a prevalent choice for leadership positions in the hierarchy. This choice is made primarily because the decision makers feel more secure in choosing someone who is characteristic of themselves. There are no known studies available which suggest that there is a difference in the quality of performance between white and African American educational leaders.

African Americans in education are viewed by some researchers as somewhat newcomers in the field of educational leadership. While African Americans are not newcomers to the area of educational leadership, there has been limited research conducted on the role of African Americans in education (Perkins 1983). It is important to note that African Americans, both male and female, played important roles in establishing and running schools for African American children from the declaration of the end of slavery to the middle of the 1900s (Montenegro 1993). When schools desegregated, many African American schools were closed. Many African American principals in parts of the South were reassigned to positions as assistant principals to work in a school which was largely white (Franklin 1990). As there has been a steady increase in the number of African

Americans in the field of education, they are now more likely to be assigned to preside over schools in urban areas, in which the majority of the teachers are white and the majority of the students are African American or belong to other groups of color (Pollard 1997). Therefore, in addition to serving as educational leaders, these principals find themselves dealing with schools that are undergoing major social changes. They spend a considerable amount of time mediating between teachers and students of quite different backgrounds. Their mandated attention in addressing these social issues, in many cases, interferes with the academic achievement of the students in those schools.

While many African American principals are placed in most challenging circumstances, as previously mentioned, African American women, as indicated in a study by Pollard (1997), felt that they had to be two steps ahead of their competitive counterparts. African American female principals expressed a belief that their authority was more likely to be challenged than any other leader. Many African American principals felt that if they were not in the position of principal, many of their African American students would not be exposed to many of the skills needed to become successful students. African American principals also reported that they are not included in the networking of the school district with white principals, which in some instances created a void of information on the informal and/or

political climate of the school district (Franklin 1990). Franklin (1990) concluded that African American principals are needed in all schools, not just schools with African American students. The specific roles that African Americans play have important implications for policy and practices in education. They can serve as positive models for teachers and school staff members by helping them work with African American children more effectively.

Examining educational leadership from a historical perspective revealed four dominant themes that reiterate educational administration as a career for men and not for women (Tyack and Hansot 1982). The first theme is that teaching and administration have become separate but mutually dependent professions. The second is that schools have followed the mentality that existed at the turn of the century; municipal reforms have become more hierarchical as well as professional (Callahan 1967). Heavy emphasis on efficiency, and essentially a misreading of Taylor's scientific management, turned schools into competitive bureaucracies rather than collaborative service organizations, emphasizing control over instruction. The third theme is that careers in school administration rested on sponsorship rather than on open competition (Goldman and McFarland 1995). Finally, knowledge, theory, research, and policy in educational administration coalesced into a social-political structure that discouraged discussion of gender and power

issues. The general pattern in schools is that many women teach, and a few men supervise, evaluate, and manage.

Historical data on women principals show a steady decline. Women constituted 55 percent of elementary principals in 1928, 41 percent in 1948, 38 percent in 1958, 22.2 percent in 1968, and 19.6 percent in 1973 (Johnson 1973). In the first half of the decade of the 1950s, more women were employed in educational administration in central office positions, primarily as instructional supervisors. Fewer women were employed in the principalship during the decade of the 1970s because they did not receive the sponsorship that male teachers received to bureaucratically advance them into the principalship. Studies contrasting the effectiveness of male and female school administrators have consistently reported several areas in which women do as well as or better than men. Investigators have reported that women school administrators contribute to higher teacher performance and student achievement (DiBella 1977). Wheatley (1981) concluded that women take a more active role in instructional leadership.

Guthrie (1996) conducted a study to determine if the number of leadership years made a difference in school climate and in student achievement. Successful experienced principals are able to create a more effective school climate, as they are able to anticipate the needs of the school and, as a result, to plan effectively to meet the

needs of staff and students. Findings revealed that successful experienced principals make decisions on a subconscious level, utilizing senses that would not be obvious to an inexperienced principal.

Smith (1996) described leadership as a developmental process through experience. Leadership involves more than management. The development of leadership orients principals to utilize their staff to meet conflict and challenges. Through experience, leaders recognize the importance of involving co-workers in decision making. According to Nolan (1987), first-year principals often assume the role of instructional leader in the environment created by the predecessor as opposed to adopting a managerial role.

## Summary

In summary, there are many factors which determine school climate and conditions that foster student achievement. However, the school leader and endorsed leadership are among the most significant contributors. There is no doubt that strong, positive, and assertive leadership almost ensures a positive school climate and conditions that maximize learning for students, regardless of a leader's gender, race, or years of experience. Schools that are more urbanized have had a tendency to have a much higher percentage of students who are underachievers. Many of these students belong to minority groups.

Chapter III presents the theoretical framework for this investigation. Variables and definitions are introduced and defined. The relationships among the variables, the null hypotheses, and the limitations are presented.

# CHAPTER III

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## Introduction

The theoretical framework is presented in this chapter. Included are the presentation and definition of the variables and operational terminology, the relationships among the variables, the null hypotheses, limitations of the study, and a summary of the theoretical framework.

## Presentation and Definition of the Variables and Operational Definitions

There was one independent variable and five dependent variables in this study. The dependent variable was student achievement. The independent variables were (1) school climate, (2) socioeconomic status of the school, (3) gender of the principal, (4) years of experience as a principal, and (5) race of the principal. The variables and operational definitions are presented in this section.

### Dependent Variable

The dependent variable was student achievement, which refers to the ability of the student to achieve in

reading, as measured by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) normal curve equivalency scores.

## Independent Variables

The independent variables were defined as follows.

1. School climate: The working environment within the school, as measured by responses on O'Neal's Effective Schools Climate Inventory.

2. Socioeconomic status (SES): The percentage of students of the school receiving free or reduced price meals in the respective schools. For the purposes of this study, the percentage status for free and reduced price meals (SES) is as follows: low SES = 80-99 percent participation, middle SES = 26-79 percent participation, and high SES = less than 26 percent participation.

3. Gender: The principal's sex, male or female.

4. Race: The principal's race, white or African American.

5. Years of experience: The number of years the respondent had served as a principal.

## Relationship Among the Variables

In this section an explanation is given as to how the variables relate to each other as revealed in the research and literature on student achievement and school climate. Student achievement is the dependent variable or

outcome. The differences in student achievement and school climate were examined based on one independent variable (school climate) and four other independent variables: (1) principal's race, (2) principal's gender, (3) experience as a school principal, and (4) socioeconomic status of the school. The researcher contended that the variables under investigation in this study may have significant implications for improving student achievement and creating an effective school climate. Figure 1 presents the relationships among the variables.

According to Shakeshaft, Newell, and Perry (1992), the gender of participants in supervisory positions affects what is communicated to staff and how. Men and women communicate differently and listen for different information. Women focus on instructional issues, and men focus on management of the school. Gender perception does influence behavior and effectiveness. Women perceive trust as competence, and men perceive trust as confidentiality. Women must be sensitive to the feedback loop to determine if they are getting evaluative information. Men must communicate their expectations skillfully so that females on the staff do not feel that they are being treated harshly. Adams (1985) said that studying women expands views of leadership to encompass feminine characteristics, a change that is needed. While women are physically different, they are not necessarily psychologically different. Masculine gender

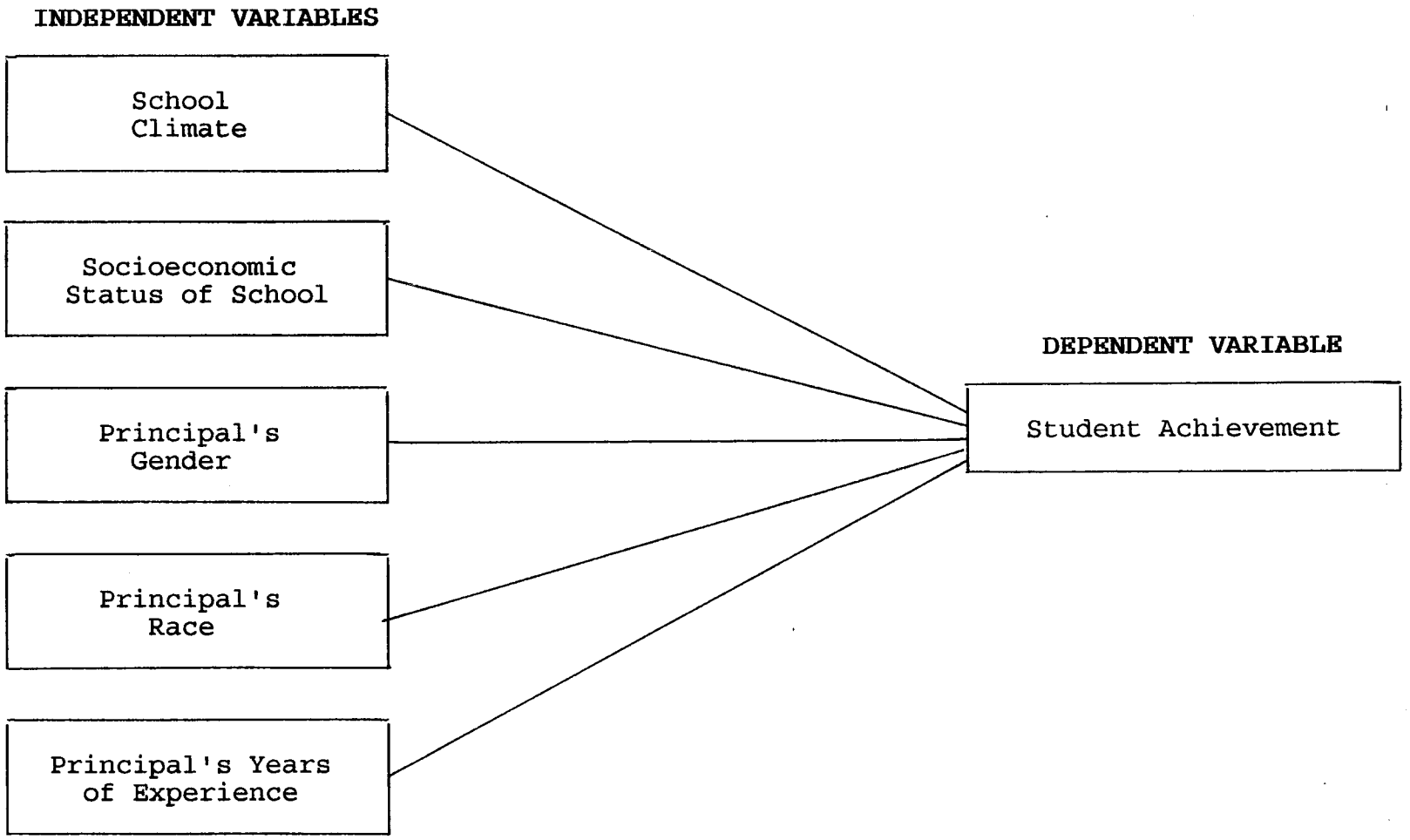


Fig. 1. Relationship Among the Variables

role characteristics such as aggressiveness, competitiveness, and self-confidence are not biological traits unique to one gender. On the contrary, the distribution of these characteristics for men and women as group overlap.

According to Guthrie (1996), leadership is described as a developmental process through experience. First-year principals use the policy and procedures handbook when making most of their decisions. Experienced principals use the policy and procedures handbook in major situations and use wisdom for routine matters.

Franklin (1990) discussed the effect of desegregation, which led black principals to different communities, which diluted their influence on the school experience. Black female principals generally do not communicate a sense of sensitivity to black female teachers. They tend to feel that they must be strong to retain their position, and they call on previous experiences of discrimination to sustain them through challenging times.

## Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. There is no significant relationship between student achievement as measured by Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) fourth-grade reading scores and school climate

as measured by O'Neal's Effective Schools Climate Inventory (ESCI) scores.

2. There is no significant relationship between student achievement as measured by Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) fourth-grade reading scores and school socioeconomic status as indicated by the free lunch status of the school.

3. There is no significant relationship between student achievement as measured by Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) fourth-grade reading scores and the principals' race.

4. There is no significant relationship between student achievement as measured by Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) fourth-grade reading scores and the principals' gender.

5. There is no significant relationship between student achievement as measured by Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) fourth-grade reading scores and the principals' years of experience.

6. In a factor analysis of the selected variables, ITBS fourth-grade reading scores will not be placed in the same factor as school climate.

7. In a regression analysis of the data, school climate will not make a significant contribution to ITBS fourth-grade reading scores.

## Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations that the researcher noted relative to this investigation:

1. There was a degree of unusual activities on the day the survey was administered.

2. There might be resistance to another survey by teachers and principals to participate in the survey.

3. Only one school system was involved in this study: the DeKalb County School System (DCSS).

4. The period of the study was limited to one year.

5. The variables in this investigation were selected by the researcher. Other variables may have impacted school climate and student achievement.

## Summary

In this chapter the independent and dependent variables were presented and defined. A discussion was conducted on the relationship among the variables, with some research given as a foundation. The null hypotheses were stated, and the limitations of the study were given.

In Chapter IV the methods and procedures that were used to conduct this study are presented. The research design, description of the setting and instrument, statistical applications, and other procedures are also included in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER IV

# METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to determine the role of the principal in creating an effective school climate and contributing to student achievement. The impact of selected variables on school climate and student achievement was also examined. The methods and procedures utilized to conduct this study are described in this chapter. The following subtopics are included: (1) research design, (2) sample population, (3) description of the setting, (4) working with human subjects, (5) description of the instrument, (6) validity and reliability of the instrument, (7) data collection procedures, (8) statistical applications, and (9) summary.

## Research Design

A survey research design was utilized to conduct this study. A representative sample of the population was selected to test the null hypotheses. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson *r*) was the statistical design selected to test the null hypotheses.

## Sample Population

The DeKalb County School System (DCSS) was the general setting for the study. The DCSS is one of the largest urban/suburban school systems in the southeastern United States. There were eighty elementary schools in the DCSS, from which a random sample of forty schools were selected. Schools were randomly selected to give all schools an equal chance of being selected. A sample size of forty schools was selected because a sample size of thirty is the norm required for a statistical test of significance. Ten additional schools in the sample allowed for dropouts.

The systematic random sampling procedure was used. The following is the procedure for the random selection of schools using systematic random sampling:

1. All schools were ranked according to levels of performance on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills normal curve equivalency reading scores.

2. The numbers were placed into a hat, and one number was randomly drawn.

3. The number selected was used as the base from which every other number was selected to obtain a sample of forty schools.

This method of systematic random sampling ensured that the dependent variable of student achievement would show variations in performance. Further, principal gender,

principal race, and school socioeconomic status were likely to be represented fairly.

Within each selected school, only certified teachers were invited to participate. Forty schools were randomly selected, and twenty-nine responded. This equals a 73 percent school representation. This 73 percent equaled 170 teachers responding.

## Working with Human Subjects

Permission to conduct this investigation was obtained from the Department of Research and Evaluation of the DeKalb County School System. A cover letter was written and submitted to the director of research and development for approval, along with an attached copy of O'Neal's Effective Schools Climate Inventory and a copy of the four chapters of the research proposal. The researcher, a central office administrator within the DCSS, met with the associate superintendent of instruction to discuss the need to involve the instructional lead teachers in the gathering of data for the study. The researcher met with each principal of the targeted schools to discuss with them the study and other logistical information. Each principal was given a copy of the approval letter for survey administration.

Participating instructional lead teachers and principals were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher also emphasized to participants that the data

collected from the surveys would only be used for this study, in an effort to create a nonthreatening climate for the investigation to be conducted. It was hoped that the researcher's efforts at reassurance would encourage the participants to respond in an honest and complete manner.

## Description of the Instrument

The instrument that was used to collect data for testing the null hypotheses was O'Neal's Effective Schools Climate Inventory. This instrument is a forty-item Likert-type scale that was used to collect data from the teachers of the participating schools. The four rating scales included in this instrument are: N = Never, R = Rarely, U = Usually, and A = Always. The category "Always" is indicative of teacher satisfaction. A test-retest with a seven-day interval was performed to measure the validity and reliability of the items on this instrument.

The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) is a set of standardized tests produced by Riverside Publishing Company. The ITBS test levels range from 5 to 14, which correlates to approximate chronological ages within grade levels. The test has several subtests; the reading comprehension score was used in conducting the study. The normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores were used to determine the averages. The validity and reliability of the ITBS are in accordance with the appropriate standards. According to the publisher, the

validity of the testing is also a function of the local testing administration process. This includes carefully following the administration procedures and adhering to proper test security.

The researcher collected from a central office data source (school profile) the race, gender, and years of leadership experience for the principals of the targeted schools.

## Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures were consistent in all participating schools in this survey. After the researcher obtained permission from each local principal to conduct the study in the respective schools, the instructional lead teachers served as the official facilitators for data collection in each of the forty schools. They assisted the researcher with the logistics of administering and collecting O'Neal's Effective Schools Climate Inventory. Participants responded on a scanable answer sheet, which was the basis for a computer-generated analysis. The ITBS data were retrieved from the Department of Tests in the DCSS for the fourth grade in each of the targeted schools. The building average summary profile was used to collect the fourth-grade student achievement data in reading.

## Statistical Applications

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson *r*) was the statistical design selected to test the null hypotheses. The Pearson *r* correlation was used because the researcher was investigating relationships between selected variables that may impact student achievement and school climate. Additional statistical techniques used were factor analysis and multiple regression.

## Summary

The quantitative approach was used in this research design, along with other statistical methods, tools, and techniques. Forty elementary schools were selected to participate in the study. O'Neal's Effective Schools Climate Inventory was used to collect data on school climate from teachers of the targeted schools. A random stratified sample of forty elementary schools was chosen from a total of eighty elementary schools.

# CHAPTER 5

# ANALYSIS OF DATA

## Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of school climate on improving academic achievement. Data were gathered from the ITBS reading comprehension test reports from the 1997 school year. Additional data, such as years of experience as a principal, race of principal, and gender of principal, were gathered from the central data files from the department of personnel. The data on the socioeconomic status of the school were gathered from the free and reduced priced meal report in the system master file.

## Demographic Data

Table 1 provides demographic data for the schools involved in this study. The data in this table include the following for each school: reading ITBS score, principal gender, principal race, years of leadership experience, and school socioeconomic status (SES). The schools are presented in numerical order; number assignments were given to the schools to protect their identity.

Table 1.--Demographic Data of ITBS NCE Scores, Principals' Gender, Race, and Years of Leadership Experience, and School Socioeconomic Status (SES)

| School | ITBS* | Years of Experience | Principal Race | Principal Gender | % SES** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 57 | 21 | White | Male | 60 |
| 2 | 55 | 2.5 | Black | Female | 72 |
| 3 | 54 | 1 | White | Male | 54 |
| 4 | 54 | 9 | Black | Female | 41 |
| 5 | 53 | 4.5 | White | Female | 65 |
| 6 | 52 | 12 | White | Female | 33 |
| 7 | 52 | 9 | White | Female | 37 |
| 8 | 51 | 9 | Black | Female | 57 |
| 9 | 50 | 1 | Black | Female | 60 |
| 10 | 50 | 4 | White | Male | 56 |
| 11 | 50 | 9 | White | Male | 42 |
| 12 | 49 | 20 | Black | Male | 94 |
| 13 | 48 | 6 | White | Male | 54 |
| 14 | 48 | 14 | White | Male | 77 |
| 15 | 48 | 3 | White | Male | 33 |
| 16 | 48 | 3 | White | Female | 65 |
| 17 | 47 | 2 | White | Female | 70 |
| 18 | 47 | 1 | White | Female | 83 |
| 19 | 47 | 13 | White | Female | 84 |
| 20 | 47 | 2 | White | Female | 74 |
| 21 | 46 | 14 | Black | Female | 92 |
| 22 | 46 | 9 | White | Male | 73 |
| 23 | 45 | 16 | Black | Male | 85 |
| 24 | 45 | 1 | White | Male | 92 |
| 25 | 44 | 1 | White | Female | 88 |
| 26 | 44 | 18 | Black | Female | 95 |
| 27 | 44 | 5 | Black | Male | 89 |
| 28 | 43 | 2 | Black | Female | 90 |
| 29 | 42 | 13 | White | Male | 83 |
| 30 | 42 | 10 | Black | Female | 79 |
| 31 | 42 | 8 | White | Male | 96 |
| 32 | 40 | 3 | Black | Female | 99 |
| 33 | 40 | 14 | Black | Female | 93 |
| 34 | 73 | 12 | Black | Female | 2 |
| 35 | 68 | 12 | Black | Female | 2 |
| 36 | 65 | 1 | White | Female | 35 |
| 37 | 64 | 11 | White | Female | 10 |
| 38 | 63 | 2 | Black | Female | 34 |
| 39 | 62 | 8 | White | Male | 30 |
| 40 | 59 | 24 | White | Male | 33 |

*ITBS NCE fourth-grade reading scores.
**Percent on free/reduced lunch (socioeconomic status).

Table 1 shows the demographic data collected for each school in this study. Forty elementary schools were randomly chosen to participate in the study. Of the forty schools identified, twenty-nine responded. The 73 percent return rate was considered acceptable for this study. Of the original forty schools, the ITBS NCE scores for fourth grade reading ranged from a high of 73 to a low of 40. The years of experience as principal ranged from one year to twenty-four years. There were twenty-four female and fourteen male principals. Twenty-four of these principals were white, and fourteen were African American. The socioeconomic status of the schools ranged from schools that had less than 2 percent receiving free or reduced-priced meals to schools with more than 89 percent receiving free or reduced-priced meals.

## Testing the Hypotheses

Table 2 reveals the Pearson *r* correlation analysis of the independent variables and their relationship to the dependent variable for Hypotheses 1 through 5.

Hypothesis 1. There is no significant relationship between student achievement as measured by Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) fourth-grade reading scores and school climate as measured by O'Neal's Effective Schools Climate Inventory (ESCI) scores.

Table 2.--Pearson r Correlations for ITBS Fourth Grade Reading Scores, School Climate, Free Lunch Status, and Principal's Demographics

| | ITBS | SCHCLIME | FRLUNCH | RACE | GENDER | YRSEXP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ITBS | 1.0000 | .2677** | -.8340** | -.0404 | .1803** | .0367 |
| SCHCLIME | .2677** | 1.0000 | -.2559 | .0259 | .0212 | .1263** |
| FRLUNCH | -.8340** | -.2559 | 1.0000 | -.1585** | .2142** | .0763* |
| RACE | -.0404 | .0259 | -.1585** | 1.0000 | .3108** | -.2479** |
| GENDER | -.1803** | .0212 | .2142** | .3108** | 1.0000 | .1984** |
| YRSEXP | .0367 | .1263** | .0763* | -.2479** | .1984 | 1.0000 |

*Significant at .05.

**Significant at .01.

Hypothesis 1 was generated to assess the relationship between ITBS fourth-grade reading scores and school climate. The data with respect to this hypothesis are stated in the Pearson r correlation presented in table 2.

The fourth-grade ITBS reading scores have a correlation of .267 with school climate, which is significant beyond the .05 level. Because a significant relationship was found, the null hypothesis is rejected. The relationship is positive; this means that the higher the climate scores, the higher the ITBS scores.

Hypothesis 2. There is no significant relationship between student achievement as measured by Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) fourth-grade reading scores and school socioeconomic status as indicated by the free lunch status of the school.

The data on this hypothesis are shown in the Pearson r correlation matrix in table 2. In this table, fourth-grade ITBS reading scores have a correlation of -.834 with free lunch status, which is significant beyond the .05 level. Because a significant relationship was found, the null hypothesis is rejected. The correlation is negative, meaning there is an inverse relationship: the higher the free lunch status of the schools, the lower the ITBS scores.

Hypothesis 3. There is no significant relationship between student achievement as measured by Iowa Tests of

Basic Skills (ITBS) fourth-grade reading scores and the principals' race.

The data on this hypothesis are shown in the Pearson r correlation matrix in table 2. In this table, fourth-grade ITBS reading scores have a correlation of -.040 with principal's race, which is not significant at the .05 level. Because no significant relationship was found, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 4. There is no significant relationship between student achievement as measured by Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) fourth-grade reading scores and the principals' gender.

The data on this hypothesis are shown in the Pearson r correlation matrix in table 2. In this table, fourth-grade ITBS reading scores have a correlation of -.180 with principal's gender, which is significant beyond the .05 level. Because a significant relationship was found, the null hypothesis is rejected. The correlation is negative, meaning there is an inverse relationship: the male principals (coded 2) were in schools with lower test scores.

Hypothesis 5. There is no significant relationship between student achievement as measured by Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) fourth-grade reading scores and the principals' years of experience.

The data on this hypothesis are shown in the Pearson r correlation matrix in table 2. In this table, fourth-

grade ITBS reading scores have a correlation of .036 with principal's years of leadership experience, which is not significant at the .05 level. Because no significant relationship was found, the null hypothesis is accepted.

## Factor Analysis

Hypothesis 6 was developed because of the weak relationship between ITBS and climate in the correlation matrix as compared with ITBS and free lunch status. A factor analysis was done to examine these relationships more closely. It was expected that free lunch status would be placed in the same factor as ITBS scores, thereby displacing climate.

Hypothesis 6. In a factor analysis of the selected variables, ITBS fourth-grade reading scores will not be placed in the same factor as school climate.

An observation of the interrelationships among the variables in the factor matrix, presented in table 3, indicates that the independent variables are interrelated among themselves. For example, school climate is negatively but significantly related to free lunch status of schools. This means that schools with high free lunch status also have low climate scores. In addition, climate is also positively related to principals' years of experience. Principals' race is negatively but significantly related to free lunch status and principals' years of experience; white principals

Table 3.--Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix: ITBS Reading Score, School Climate, Free Lunch Status, and Administrator Demographics

| Variable | Factor I | Factor II | Factor III |
|---|---|---|---|
| FRLUNCH | -.93256* | .01255 | .14097 |
| ITBS | .91320* | -.13332 | .03386 |
| SCHCLIME | .50330* | .16126 | .40989 |
| RACE | .13304 | .82184* | -.38412 |
| GENDER | -.21296 | .77968* | .36616 |
| YRSEXP | -.19200 | -.05733 | .88783* |

*Loaded in regressive factor.

(coded 2) had more experience and were in schools with predominantly high free lunch status. Principals' race is also related to gender, meaning that white principals were mainly male. Principals' gender is negatively but significantly correlated with ITBS reading scores, meaning that male principals (coded 2) were assigned to schools with lower test scores. Gender is positively correlated with free lunch status of schools, principals' race, and principal's years of experience.

In table 3, three factors are created by varimax rotation. Each factor represents the common relationship among the variables placed in the respective factors. A

variable is placed in a factor in which the factor coefficient is highest. For example, free lunch status is placed in Factor I with a coefficient of -.93256 and in Factor II and III with coefficients of .01255 and .14097, respectively. Because the coefficient is highest in Factor I, the variable is considered as "loaded" or placed in Factor I. Placement of other variables in the respective factors is similarly determined.

Factor I: In Factor I are placed free lunch status of schools, fourth-grade ITBS reading scores, and school climate. Free lunch status of schools has a negative or inverse relationship with ITBS scores and school climate. When the free lunch status is high, the test scores and climate are low. Conversely, when the free lunch status is low, the ITBS scores and climate are high. These variables form one common bonding or syndrome which tends to act in concert and independent of the other factors.

Factor II: In Factor II are placed principals' race and gender. When the variables are acting simultaneously, race and gender are independent of the other factors.

Factor III: In Factor II is placed principals' years of leadership experience. When the variables are acting simultaneously, years of experience is independent of the other factors.

## Regression Analysis

Because free lunch status, ITBS scores, and climate are placed in Factor I, it is necessary to determine the extent of the separate contributions made by free lunch status and climate to ITBS scores. A stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted as the appropriate statistic for determining the separate contributions made by free lunch status and climate to ITBS scores. Hypothesis 7 was developed to address this analysis.

Hypothesis 7. In a regression analysis of the data, school climate will not make a significant contribution to ITBS fourth-grade reading scores.

In the stepwise regression analysis, each independent variable is entered according to the order of highest contributions made to ITBS scores. Therefore, the results ranked the independent variables in the order of their contributions from highest to lowest on ITBS, as shown in table 3.

The results of the regression analysis are shown in table 4. In this table, free lunch status is the main independent contributor to student achievement. It has a beta coefficient of -.866 with a *t* value of -45.331, which is significant beyond the .05 level. The principals' race made a much smaller independent contribution with a beta weight of -.185, which is significant beyond the .05 level. Principals' gender (.054), climate (.044), and principals'

Table 4.--Multiple Regression Analysis of ITBS Fourth-Grade Reading Scores with School Climate, Free Lunch Status, and Principals' Demographic Variables

| Multiple R | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | Standard Error |
|---|---|---|---|
| .85673 | .73399 | .73247 | 3.38277 |

Variables in the Equation

| Variable | Beta | t | Probability of t |
|---|---|---|---|
| FRLUNCH | -.866 | -45.331 | .000* |
| RACE | -.185 | -9.250 | .000* |
| GENDER | .054 | 2.965 | .007* |
| SCHCLIME | .044 | 2.431 | .015* |
| YRSEXP | .040 | 2.123 | .034* |

*Significant beyond .05 level.

years of experience (.040) in that order made very small but significant contributions at the .05 level. These contributions are significant mainly because of the large number of teachers responding to the climate survey. It should be noted that the total amount of adjusted $R^2$ change made by these variables is 73 percent (.73247). Since the beta coefficient of free lunch status is -.866, a substantial amount of the changes in ITBS is made by free lunch status of schools.

## Discussion

In the correlation matrix there is a significant relationship between socioeconomic status and student achievement (.834). Students in schools with a lower socioeconomic status had lower reading scores on the ITBS. Students who attended schools of a middle to upper socioeconomic status had higher test scores. This finding supports those of Gastright (1989), who found that the retention rates for students in lower socioeconomic schools were twice those of students from higher socioeconomic schools. Thompson (1968) and Coleman (1966) also concluded that impoverished children traditionally have performed poorly on standardized tests in most of the nation's public schools.

In the correlation matrix there is a significant relationship between the ITBS fourth-grade reading scores and school climate as measured by the climate survey. Students had higher test scores when they attended schools with high morale and positive school climate. Therefore, this finding supports the findings of Sergiovanni (1987), who stated that climate affects the quality of life in a school, as well as the quality of teaching and learning. Brookover and Lezotte (1982) also concluded that teachers with high morale and a good school climate are essential for student success. Brookover and Lezotte (1982) stated that the personnel in the higher achieving schools felt much

more successful than their counterparts, which ultimately affected their psychological well-being and commitment to their students. Lunney (1996) also supported these findings. Lunney (1996) emphasized the importance of creating a school climate that encourages teachers to select and implement instructional initiatives for increasing student achievement.

## Summary

This investigation was conducted in forty elementary schools in the DeKalb County School System to determine the impact of school climate, principals' race, principals' gender, principals' years of leadership experience, and school socioeconomic status on student achievement. Demographic information on the participating schools was presented. The results of testing the hypotheses indicated the ITBS reading scores and the school climate are significantly related to the number of students who receive free or reduced-priced school meals.

In the correlation matrix, ITBS fourth-grade reading scores are significantly but negatively correlated with free lunch status of the school and principals' gender but are correlated positively with climate. In a factor analysis of the data, ITBS, free lunch status, and school climate were placed in Factor I. However, in the regression analysis of the data, free lunch status made the highest contribution to

the ITBS reading scores, followed by principals' race, principals' gender, school climate, and principals' experience.

Chapter VI presents and discusses the findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations of the study. The analysis of the data in Chapter V serves as a basis for discussion in Chapter VI.

# CHAPTER VI

# FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary purpose of this investigation was to study the impact of school climate on improving academic achievement and the role of the principal in creating an effective school climate for learning as well as to determine the implications for leadership training and selection of schools with declining academic performance. The design for this study was a quantitative research design. There was a random selection of schools. This chapter presents the findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations based on the results from the research conducted.

## Findings

The results from the testing of the seven null hypotheses have provided answers for the research questions. The findings for each null hypothesis are summarized. The variables under study were (1) student achievement, (2) principals' gender, (3) principals' years of leadership experience, (4) principals' race, (5) school socioeconomic status, and (6) school climate. The impact of the dependent

and demographic variables on student achievement has been described in the findings.

Hypothesis 1. There is no significant relationship between student achievement as measured by Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) fourth-grade reading scores and school climate as measured by O'Neal's Effective Schools Climate Inventory (ESCI) scores.

There is a significant relationship between the ITBS fourth-grade reading scores as school climate as measured by the ESCI scores. Students had higher test scores when they attended schools with high morale and positive school climate. Therefore, this finding supports the findings of Sergiovanni (1987), who stated that climate affects the quality of life in a school, as well as the quality of teaching and learning. Brookover and Lezotte (1977) also concluded that teachers with high morale and a good school climate are essential for student success. Brookover and Lezotte (1977) stated that the personnel in the higher achieving schools felt much more successful than their counterparts, which ultimately affected their morale and commitment to their students. Lunney (1996) also supported these findings. Lunney (1996) emphasized the importance of creating a school climate that encourages teachers to select and implement instructional initiatives for increasing student achievement.

Hypothesis 2. There is no significant relationship between student achievement as measured by Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) fourth-grade reading scores and school socioeconomic status as indicated by the free lunch status of the school.

There is a significant relationship between school socioeconomic status and student achievement. Students in schools with a lower socioeconomic status had lower reading test scores on the ITBS. Students who attended schools of a middle to upper socioeconomic status had higher test scores. This finding supports those of Gastright (1989), who found that the retention rates for students in lower socioeconomic schools were twice those of students from higher socio-economic schools. Thompson (1986) and Coleman (1966) also concluded that impoverished children traditionally have performed poorly on standardized tests in most of the nation's public schools.

Hypothesis 3. There is no significant relationship between student achievement as measured by Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) fourth-grade reading scores and the principals' race.

There is no significant relationship between the ITBS fourth-grade reading scores and the race of the principal. The principals' race had no impact on the performance of the students. There were no studies located that suggest that there is a difference in the quality of student

performance for schools with white or African American school leaders.

Hypothesis 4. There is no significant relationship between student achievement as measured by Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) fourth-grade reading scores and the principals' gender.

There is no significant relationship between the ITBS fourth-grade reading scores and the principals' gender. This finding contradicts the findings in some studies. Studies contrasting the effectiveness of male and female school leaders have reported several areas in which women do as well as or even better than men. Clement et al. (1977) concluded that female school leaders contribute to higher teacher performance and student achievement. Wheatley (1981) also had similar findings and concluded that women take a more active stance toward instructional leadership.

Hypothesis 5. There is no significant relationship between student achievement as measured by Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) fourth-grade reading scores and the principals' years of experience.

There is no significant relationship between the ITBS fourth-grade reading scores and the principals' years of leadership experience. The principals' years of experience did not impact student achievement. This finding is somewhat contradictive to the conclusions of Guthrie (1996) and Smith (1996). Guthrie (1996) found that experienced

leaders can better anticipate and predict problems. Smith (1996) stated that it is through experience that leaders recognize the importance of involving co-workers in the decision-making process.

Hypothesis 6. In a factor analysis of the selected variables, ITBS fourth-grade reading scores will not be placed in the same factor as school climate.

Free lunch status of schools, ITBS fourth-grade reading scores, and school climate are placed in Factor I. Free lunch status of schools has an inverse relationship with ITBS scores and school climate.

Hypothesis 7. In a regression analysis of the data, school climate will not make a significant contribution to ITBS fourth-grade reading scores.

In the stepwise regression analysis, the greatest contributing factor to ITBS reading scores is free lunch status. The principals' race, principals' gender, and school climate made a statistically significant contribution but a practically insignificant contribution to the ITBS reading scores.

## Conclusions

After an analysis of the data in this study, the conclusions were drawn. The conclusions are summarized for each finding, respectively.

This research tended to show that school climate impacts student performance. This finding indicates that establishing a positive and supportive school climate is essential for student learning and achievement. The principal serves as the facilitator and "cheerleader" for establishing an effective school climate. When employees are physically and psychologically comfortable and satisfied, they have a tendency to be more productive and accountable. This will ultimately affect what the students learn, how they learn, and how they perform on standardized tests. The quality and quantity of teaching are controlled by the climate of the school.

The research shows that there is a significant relationship between socioeconomic status and student achievement. Students in lower socioeconomic schools did not perform as well as those in higher socioeconomic schools. This finding may be indicative of the fact that students from impoverished communities are not as exposed to conditions conducive to learning as their counterparts. Students from impoverished communities sometimes enter school unprepared to learn, whereas students from higher socioeconomic communities have often engaged in preschool programs and have home environments that are compatible with public classrooms. The latter students come to school prepared to learn, and many are also accelerated learners.

It was found that there was no significant relationship between student achievement and the principals' race. This finding suggests that the color of a principal's skin has absolutely nothing to do with the performance level of students in a school. There has been a perception, throughout history, that African American leaders are the best role models for schools that are predominantly black. The same could be said for white leaders and leaders from other ethnic groups. However, the true success of the principalship lies in the heart of the individual. The principalship relies heavily on the ability to have good human relations skills, intelligence, common sense, a sense of humor, good decision-making skills, and the ability to exercise good judgment in problematic situations. These are all innate qualities and have nothing to do with the color of a person's skin.

It was found that there was no significant relationship between student achievement and the principals' gender. The same points could be made as those stated in the findings in regard to race. A person's gender does not make him or her a better leader. However, the research that has concluded that female principals excel in certain areas, compared to their male counterparts, merits explanation. Because females have been kept out of the leadership bureaucracy for so many years and were not able to acquire leadership positions in education, many are out to prove that they

are indeed very capable. For many years, females were only hired as classroom teachers, while males dominated the principalship and superintendent positions. In some settings, males are still dominant in leadership positions. However, in urban settings the reverse is true. Women may excel in certain areas because they are eager to have the opportunity to serve in a leadership capacity. Also, many women want to emphasize that it was disadvantageous for the system not to have hired females in leadership positions in former years.

There was no significant relationship between student achievement and the principals' years of administrative experience. The findings suggest that principals with several years of experience have no advantage over those with fewer years of experience. It is the perception of the public and many educators that principals who have more experience provide better leadership. Additionally, it is perceived that principals who are more experienced have more instructional expertise and supervise schools in which students are more likely to be academically successful. However, inexperienced principals are sometimes the most innovative, and many are instructional risk takers. The leadership style of the principal is the main determinant of the instructional climate and conditions that enhance student learning, not the principal's years of experience.

Factor analysis of the variables confirmed the significant relationship between the ITBS fourth-grade

reading scores and school climate. Multiple regression analysis also confirmed that school climate made a significant contribution to ITBS fourth-grade reading scores.

## Implications

The following implications were derived from the findings and conclusions of this study.

1. Since school climate impacts student achievement, more emphasis should be placed on helping leaders foster a positive school climate.

2. There is a need to add more support programs for schools with high participation in the free and reduced lunch program.

3. There should be a conscious effort to recruit equally female and male school personnel.

4. School leaders of all ethnicities and administrators with varied levels of experience, a school leader's innate qualities, and leadership style should be considered and examined closely when leaders are assigned to the principalship of a school.

5. There seems to be a high correlation between schools with high SES, high student achievement, and positive school climate.

6. There seems to be a correlation between schools with low SES, low student achievement, and low school climate.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, conclusions, and implications of the study, the following recommendations are made.

1. Staff development should be offered to help leaders and staff members develop and foster a positive school climate that enhances student achievement. School climate surveys should be conducted in each school to assess school climate and staff development support offered as needed. If climate does not improve after support systems are offered, it may be necessary to change leaders in the school.

2. Special programs should be employed in schools that have a high free/reduced lunch rate to help staff become more accountable for student learning. Special programs should also be employed to bridge the gaps that exist in the learning continuum for students.

3. An administration mentoring system should be created in which female principals are paired with male counterparts to provide instructional support and strategies which will enhance student achievement.

4. The school system should be restructured and reorganized to provide appropriate instructional treatment to meet the needs of the system's diverse socioeconomic clientele.

## Summary

Chapter VI has given a brief synopsis of the entire study. The findings were presented based on the analysis of data relative to the null hypotheses and research questions. Discussions of the investigator's conclusions, implications, and recommendations were also included in this chapter. It is the desire of this investigator that the findings and discussion in this study be used in improving the efforts of schools in addressing the mission of academic achievement.

# APPENDIX A

## LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

# DeKalb County School System

**Board of Education Members**
William Bradley Bryant, Chair
Phil McGregor, Vice Chair
Elizabeth Andrews
Frances Edwards
Lynn Cherry Grant
Mike Kelly
Terry C. Morris

James R. Hallford, Superintendent

3770 North Decatur Road, Decatur, GA 30032-1099 District Office: (404) 297-1200; (404) 297-2300


January 16, 1998

Dr. Ganga Persaud
Research and Evaluation
Division of Instruction
DeKalb County School System
3770 North Decatur Road
Decatur, GA 30032

Dear Dr. Persaud:

I am requesting approval from the Department of Research and Evaluation to conduct research on *The Impact of School Climate and Other Selected Variables of Student Achievement* in elementary schools in the DeKalb County School System. This research is in conjunction with my proposal for a doctorate degree at Clark Atlanta University.

My studies will not begin until your approval for this survey is received. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

James H. Williams

James H. Williams
Associate Superintendent for School Administration

JHW:ks

# APPENDIX B

## TEXT OF LETTER GRANTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

# DeKalb County School System

**Board of Education Members**
William Bradley Bryant, Chair
Phil McGregor, Vice Chair
Elizabeth Andrews
Frances Edwards
Lynn Cherry Grant
Mike Kelly
Terry C. Morris

James R. Hallford, Superintendent

3770 North Decatur Road, Decatur, GA 30032-1099 District Office: (404) 297-1200; (404) 297-2300


January 19, 1998

Dear Cooperating Principals:

The Department of Research and Evaluation has approved Mr. Jim Williams' (Associate Superintendent for School Administration) request to conduct research on *The Impact of School Climate and Other Selected Variables of Student Achievement* in the elementary schools in the DeKalb County School System.

He has successfully defined the proposal for the doctorate degree at Clark Atlanta University.

The Department of Research and Evaluation is interested in the outcome of this research, and hence seeks your cooperation in facilitating the administration of the questionnaire.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ganga Persaud

Ganga Persaud, Ph.D.
Research & Evaluation

GP/dj

## APPENDIX C

## LETTER TO PRINCIPALS AND SURVEY INSTRUMENT

January 28, 1998

Dear Selected Principals:

I am writing this note to ask you to designate a staff member, preferably a paraprofessional assigned to your school, to administer the O'Neal's Effective Schools Climate Inventory to all regular education and special education teachers on your staff. This survey should take approximately fifteen minutes to complete. The results of the survey will be used for my doctoral dissertation at Clark Atlanta University.

Schools have been randomly selected to participate in this project. All information gathered will be treated confidentially and with total anonymity. School names and respondents' names will not be identified.

Please ask your school designee to:

Expect the surveys to be delivered on Monday, February 2, 1998.

Administer the survey at a faculty meeting during the first week of February.

Collect all surveys before respondents leave the faculty meeting.

Send survey results through courier mail to Dr. Ganga Persaud, District Office, Building B, on or before February 5, 1998.

Thank you in advance for assisting me with my graduate project. If you need additional information, please call me at 404-297-2372.

Sincerely,

James H. Williams

# O'NEAL'S EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS CLIMATE INVENTORY (ESCI)

**Read each item on the O'NEALS' ESCI carefully. Mark the response that best describes your current school setting. Your choices are**

**N = Never** **R = Rarely** **U = Usually** **A = Always**

| | N | R | U | A |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Professional personnel feel ownership in the school's mission and goals. | | | | |
| 2. The school building is comfortable. | | | | |
| 3. Decisions are made at the appropriate level in the school hierarchy. | | | | |
| 4. Students exhibit school spirit. | | | | |
| 5. At the initiative of leadership personnel, the teachers in the school work together to coordinate the instructional program within and across grades. | | | | |
| 6. Leadership personnel in the school lead formal discussions concerning instruction and student achievement. | | | | |
| 7. Leadership personnel assume the responsibility of achieving school goals and objectives. | | | | |
| 8. Assignments are planned to provide students with opportunities for success. | | | | |
| 9. School leadership personnel closely monitor student progress. | | | | |
| 10. Parents are supportive of the school's instructional programs. | | | | |
| 11. Parents visit the school frequently. | | | | |
| 12. Parents are informed of policies and procedures of the school. | | | | |
| 13. The school's instructional goals and objectives are communicated to the staff. | | | | |
| 14. The school's instructional goals and objectives are communicated to the parents. | | | | |
| 15. Professional personnel have provided input in the school's mission and goals. | | | | |
| 16. School discipline policies and procedures are administered firmly, fairly, and consistently. | | | | |
| 17. The school building and campus are well-maintained and clean. | | | | |
| 18. Teachers and leadership personnel together assume responsibility for discipline in the school. | | | | |
| 19. Professional personnel believe that all students in the school can master basic skills as a result of the instructional program. | | | | |
| 20. Teachers are accountable for students mastering all basic skills at the grade level. | | | | |

**ESCI - Page 2**

**N = Never** **R = Rarely** **U = Usually** **A = Always**

| | N | R | U | A |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21. High expectations for success are communicated to the staff. | | | | |
| 22. High expectations for success are communicated to the students. | | | | |
| 23. Expectations for professional personnel are consistent with the goals and objectives of the school. | | | | |
| 24. Professional personnel are actively involved in school decision-making processes. | | | | |
| 25. Student accomplishments are recognized formally and informally. | | | | |
| 26. Leadership personnel assume the responsibility for improvement in the school. | | | | |
| 27. Leadership personnel minimize the number of non-instructional interruptions in classrooms. | | | | |
| 28. Teachers minimize the number of non-instructional interruptions in the classrooms. | | | | |
| 29. Homework relates to instructional objectives. | | | | |
| 30. Analyses of test data are used in planning modifications to the school instructional program. | | | | |
| 31. Teachers use multiple assessment methods to monitor student progress on instructional objectives. | | | | |
| 32. Teachers use data from formal and informal assessments to provide feedback to students. | | | | |
| 33. Teachers use data from formal and informal assessments to provide feedback to students. | | | | |
| 34. Parents rate the school as effective. | | | | |
| 35. Parent-teacher conferences focus on student achievement in the basic skills. | | | | |
| 36. Parents are involved in the activities of the school. | | | | |
| 37. Other than parent conferences and report cards, the school has formal methods to communicate regularly with parents. | | | | |
| 38. Instructional objectives are sequenced across grade levels. | | | | |
| 39. Students who do not master basic skills are remediated. | | | | |
| 40. Supervision is focused on instructional improvement. | | | | |
| 41. Leadership personnel discusses with teachers ways to identify students with learning problems. | | | | |
| 42. Leadership personnel discusses with teachers ways to identify the causes of students' learning problems. | | | | |

**ESCI - Page 3**

**N = Never** **R = Rarely** **U = Usually** **A = Always**

| | N | R | U | A |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 43. Leadership personnel discusses with teachers ways to identify learning styles of low achievers. | | | | |
| 44. Leadership personnel discusses with teachers ways to determine the home factors that relate to students learning problems. | | | | |
| 45. Leadership personnel discusses with teachers ways to ensure that students with learning problems make improvements. | | | | |
| 46. Leadership personnel discusses with teachers ways to match or align the curriculum to learning styles when teaching. | | | | |
| 47. Leadership personnel discusses with teachers ways to create teaching methods to match the learning styles of students. | | | | |
| 48. Leadership personnel discusses with teachers techniques for questioning students so as to promote higher order thinking skills. | | | | |
| 49. Leadership personnel discusses with teachers ways to develop strategies for enabling students with learning problems to acquire higher order thinking skills. | | | | |
| 50. Leadership personnel discusses with teachers strategies for using students answers in building on the lesson. | | | | |
| 51. Leadership personnel discusses with teachers how to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. | | | | |
| 52. Students who had discipline problems are now well behaved. | | | | |
| 53. Students who were not participatory at the beginning of the year are now more engaged in discussions. | | | | |
| 54. Students with learning problems are more responsive to innovative teaching. | | | | |
| 55. Students with learning problems are more responsive to cooperative learning. | | | | |
| 56. Students with "D" or lower grades at the beginning of the school year are now earning "C" or better grades. | | | | |
| 57. Students with "C" grades at the beginning of the school year are now earning "B" and "A" grades. | | | | |
| 58. Students with "B" grades at the beginning of the school year are now earning "A" grades. | | | | |

***Thank you for your cooperation.***

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